

By **BOB BECK**

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Oh, where are those games of yesteryear?

Games like kick the can, Annie-Annie-over, blind man's bluff.

And marbles. What ever happened to marbles?

Do boys (and a few tomboys) play marbles any more? Two decades ago every vacant lot and school yard was filled with boys squatting around large rings drawn in the dirt, squinting and shooting and arguing.

The "migs" champ in those days was always proud to show you the jars filled with colorful agates and puries and steelies he had won from his less-skillful peers. The losers ended up with merely a handful of "chippies," glass marbles with chips broken out, which the real marbles experts scorned.

A survey of local playgrounds and a discussion with youngsters reveals the game of marbles is almost a lost art today, although for some reason variety stores report a healthy sale of the glass objects continues.

"Sure, we sell lots of marbles," said the manager of Boyd's 88

Center in downtown Vancouver. "No, I don't know what they do with them but the kids are still buying them."

A check with a number of boys in the 8 to 12-year bracket revealed an almost complete unfamiliarity with the sport.

A trip down memory lane is almost automatic with the over-30 crowd with the following glossary of terms:

- **MIGS** - A synonym for marbles as objects and for the game itself.

- **BIG RING** - A marbles game in which a circle of from six to eight feet diameter is drawn in the dirt. The game is played inside this ring by boys kneeling outside.

- **LITTLE RING** - Similar to Big Ring, except that the players shoot from various distances from a ring of about a one-foot diameter.

- **LAGGING** - Tossing and rolling marbles at a line to see who gets to shoot first.

- **DATES** - The marbles each player places inside the ring to start the game.

- **PEAK** - To place the target marbles inside the ring on top of small pyramids of mud.

- **FUDGING** - To illegally move

one's hand inside the ring in shooting.

- **SLIPS** - The result of fumbling the shooting marble, with the result that it is not directed toward the target marbles.

- **VENTS** - An utterance designed to prevent some rule from being forced.

- **CHASE 'EMS** - A marble game in which two players joust by sending their marbles in pursuit of one another's.

- **STEELIE** - A steel ball bearing of any size used as a marble, usually resulting in the creation of a number of "chippies."

- **AGATE** - An expensive and highly-desired marble, originally ground from stone.

- **PURIE** - A clear glass marble, without the usual colored designs in it.

- **GRAB DATES AND RUN** - A command shouted at the sound of the school bell, upon which each participant seizes as many marbles as possible from the ring and runs to the sanctuary of the school room.

That's the way it was, boys and girls, in the days before television reared its ugly head.